United Nations E/2005/SR.13

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

13 July 2005

Original: English

Substantive session of 2005
High-level segment

Provisional summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 1 July 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Akram ..... (Pakistan)
later: Mr. Verbeke (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

Contents

Panel presentation on the response of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) to the Millennium Declaration

Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

05-40554 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Panel presentation on the response of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) to the Millennium Declaration

1. **The President** drew attention to a CEB report entitled "One United Nations — catalyst for progress and change".

2. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the dialogue between the executive heads in CEB and the Economic and Social Council was not as systematic and visible as it could or should be. The Council's structure led to a certain dispersion in executive heads' participation and CEB reports were not the best basis for a truly comprehensive policy dialogue. Moreover, there was no single overriding focus for the dialogue.

3. The progress being made in the implementation of the overall development objectives of the Millennium Declaration provided an obvious focus for the present and the future. A key proposal for reform of the Council put forward by the Secretary-General involved granting it a clear mandate to exercise a central role in monitoring implementation. Such a mandate could provide a comprehensive platform for the kind of dialogue between the Council and CEB that all wished to see. The CEB report under consideration should be seen as a prelude to that renewed and expanded dialogue.

4. In recent years, the Council and CEB had worked together to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into the wider development agenda. The concept of coordinated and integrated follow-up to conferences promoted by the Council was central to the policy contribution that inter-agency coordination could make towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Those Goals would not be attained unless complex conference commitments were translated into action by developed and developing countries in a concerted, mutually reinforcing way with the support of the United Nations system. He was confident that the 2005 World Summit would pursue reform of the Council on that basis, leading naturally to an intensified, more purposeful and more comprehensive dialogue between the Council and CEB.

5. The Millennium Declaration had played a unique role in achieving a renewed unity of purpose among CEB executive heads, who had realized the need to show that multilateralism could work effectively. To demonstrate that point, the panel might wish to review what the Millennium Declaration had done to unify the United Nations system, how to address the challenges facing the system and how best to translate Member States' commitments into action.

6. The document entitled "The Millennium Development Goals report 2005" recently submitted by the Secretary-General complemented the CEB report. While the latter looked at the system's role in assisting countries to implement the Millennium Declaration, the former examined the actual progress made in the countries and the challenges ahead. Both were truly system-wide products.

7. **Mr. Båge** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that the CEB report was the product of a profound consultative process involving the whole United Nations system. It aimed to strengthen the case for multilateralism by demonstrating how available resources and capacities could be efficiently and effectively mobilized and how the links between normative and operational work could be further strengthened to ensure results. The consultative process leading to the report had in itself forged strengthened links and enhanced partnerships among the United Nations organizations. The Millennium Declaration had had a profound impact, leading to a new unity of purpose and a new spirit of cooperation within the system. It was critical to ensure that the system was ready to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to it, and the role of the Council, as the primary body responsible for guiding coordination and collaboration within the system, was crucial in that regard. The report was part of the ongoing processes leading up to the review at the 2005 World Summit. It highlighted the system's response in helping countries to meet the Millennium Declaration objectives in key areas and supported the central thrust of the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), namely the need for a comprehensive response to present-day challenges. Three premises had guided the system's strategies for the achievement of the Millennium Declaration objectives: the holistic nature of human-centred development and the linkages between the three pillars

of collective action in the Declaration and the Goals; the need for sustained and enhanced economic growth to support socially and environmentally sustainable development; and the creation of a supportive enabling international environment. The system stood united in its commitment to realize that vision. The report described the system's strategy in the context of the wider United Nations development agenda and the challenges ahead at the global, regional and country levels. The decisions taken at the 2005 World Summit would guide the ongoing efforts of CEB to develop further inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

8. The Millennium Declaration had challenged the United Nations system to adopt new innovative approaches to enhance collaboration in the areas of human rights, democracy and good governance. Specific examples of such collaboration were covered in chapter 3 of the report.

9. In recent years CEB had focused on how the system could most effectively create the conditions for lasting peace and security. Chapter 4 of the report detailed the thrust of the work of the United Nations in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. United Nations organizations had made considerable strides in adopting multidimensional country-based approaches to conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. To enhance the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken required a better understanding of the nature of the threats to peace and the factors contributing to conflict and it would also be necessary to strengthen the system's capacity to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of all actors in developing and implementing comprehensive prevention and peacebuilding strategies. Those challenges would require greater support from Member States and intensified efforts by the United Nations system. The system's future work in the area of peace and security would be guided by the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, by the directives of the governing bodies of its constituent members and by the ongoing evolution of the international policy and legal frameworks. In that respect, he stressed the importance of adopting a consistent and coherent approach. Achieving the vision of "One United Nations" would require the adoption of the changes outlined in the report in three core areas: deepening understanding and better managing knowledge; achieving an inclusive, purposeful mobilization of all resources and capacities; and increasing transparency and accountability.

10. **Ms. Obaid** (Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the United Nations must be accountable to the people it served and do more to achieve the Millennium Declaration objectives. People all over the world continued to look to the United Nations to champion its founding principles of peace, security, development and human rights. Governments must also be accountable for ensuring that the funds they received benefited the causes and people for which they were intended. The United Nations supported the efforts of people to hold their own Governments accountable. To ensure accountability, the United Nations system, Governments and institutions must promote human rights, good governance, democracy and the rule of law. The new CEB report emphasized the need for a common, system-wide position of zero tolerance for abuses, of openness to scrutiny, and of proactively implementing the most effective and reliable systems for monitoring, evaluation, audit and oversight, including system-wide action to evaluate the performance of the United Nations not merely in terms of effort, but mainly of real impact on targeted areas. The Paris Declaration provided a road map for increasing the effectiveness of aid and the United Nations could and should do more to improve and simplify assistance work in support of national development goals and capacity-building.

11. The Millennium Development Goals offered a unifying framework for collective action and, together with the Millennium Declaration, facilitated the evolution of a more coordinated, cohesive and functional United Nations system. The report entitled "One United Nations" showed how the United Nations system was collaborating with countries to help them to implement the Millennium Declaration meaningfully within their own national goals. While CEB had helped the United Nations system to make substantial progress, much more needed to be done for it to evolve into the cohesive force for progress and change that current conditions required and Member States had demanded. For millions of people, malnutrition, AIDS, conflict and illiteracy were a daily reality owing to man-made factors such as an unjust global trade system, a debt burden and insufficient and ineffective aid. She welcomed the decisive action taken by the entire United Nations system in recent years to improve its response to such challenges. The internal reforms being undertaken within the United Nations system were part of a larger shift in which all

development partners at the country level were working more closely in support of national objectives. Such efforts were crucial, since the real difference would have to occur at the national and community levels.

12. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that the Millennium Development Goals report 2005 was a collaborative effort which complemented the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" by providing the most comprehensive accounting to date on the extent to which the goals and targets agreed upon at the Millennium Summit had been met.

13. The report showed that despite the massive and unprecedented reduction in extreme poverty in parts of Asia during the 1990s, human welfare indicators had not improved as impressively. Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty had fallen by 130 million. However, the number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa had actually increased and the poorest had become ever-poorer: average incomes had decreased by over 3 per cent over the decade. Efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger had been set back by conflicts and natural disasters. Over the period from 1994 to 2003, 12 million out of 13 million deaths in large-scale global conflicts had been in sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Southern Asia. Those three regions were also home to three quarters of the world's 37 million refugees and displaced persons. Poverty in rural areas had been exacerbated by environmental degradation. Forests were disappearing fastest in the poorest regions, affecting most immediately those who depended on the natural environment for their subsistence and livelihoods. The exodus to urban areas had reduced pressure on rural land, but the growth of slums had outpaced urban development. For the poorest countries, external aid was critical to hopes for reducing poverty. Although development aid had reached an all-time high of $79 billion in 2004, the level was partly due to exchange rate movements and still remained historically low as a share of donor countries' incomes: aid was still equivalent to just one quarter of 1 per cent of donor countries' national income and only five countries currently met or exceeded the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of national income. Worldwide, almost 200 million people were jobless and just under half of them were young. Women were more likely to be unemployed, paid less and consigned to the worst jobs. AIDS was the fourth largest cause of adult deaths, while malaria and tuberculosis combined accounted for nearly as many deaths. All three diseases were concentrated in the poorest countries and took a huge toll on people's education and ability to perform productive work. While progress continued to be made in providing poor people with affordable and effective drugs and treatments, an estimated 6 million people would benefit from antiretroviral drugs, and well over 100 million people from the new anti-malaria drugs.

14. The United Nations development agenda had a mutually reinforcing relationship with the Millennium Development Goals. The CEB report correctly emphasized the need for a system-wide holistic approach and much more policy coherence within the United Nations system. Operations needed to be more closely integrated with conceptual and analytical work and with the norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Millennium Declaration. Finally, implementation of the United Nations development agenda must be based on principles of democratic governance, in order to give full meaning to the opening words of the Charter: "We the peoples".

15. **The President** asked whether there was sufficient integration of the regional commissions in the report.

16. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the report contained an extensive section on the role of the regional commissions and regional contributions to global policymaking.

17. **Mr. Båge** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that coming together as a system, harnessing all the synergies and putting together the capacities of the various organizations was a constant challenge. The Millennium Declaration had generated sufficient new energy for the system to come together, and it now remained for the Member States, within the executive boards and governing bodies, to ensure that the system acted together as "One United Nations".

Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

18. **Mr. Panić** (Vice-Chairman, Committee for Development Policy) said that the Committee for

Development Policy had discussed the likelihood of achieving development goals, focusing in particular on sub-Saharan Africa, the only region in the world where poverty had increased in the 1990s, a decade in which the international community had reduced its official development assistance (ODA), in which tariffs and agricultural subsidies in developed countries had hindered exports, and in which the capacity of those Governments to manage their economies had weakened. One of the obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa was the general weakening of the public sector which had occurred over the past two decades. The attainment of those goals must be a shared responsibility for the Governments and their development partners. Those countries must take steps to improve macroeconomic management, governance and accountability; but, at the same time, the volume and quality of external aid to sub-Saharan Africa must increase substantially. Although the distribution of ODA had improved, the flows still fell short of what was necessary to attain the Goals.

19. The Committee had made a number of recommendations that deserved special attention. Although the projected increase of aid from the European Union countries would contribute to the attainment of goals in the region, increases must be accompanied by improvements in quality. External assistance must be delivered in ways that strengthened the existing administrative machinery, rather than through parallel channels that bypassed and undermined existing institutional arrangements. Steps should be taken to expand the capacity to absorb aid by removing bottlenecks in the productive sectors, particularly the agricultural sector, and by enabling resources to be used effectively. Priority should be given to strengthening institutions and building capacities in order to buttress strategic planning and policymaking, as well as to improving human capital. It was crucial to stem the brain drain. In addition, the monitoring process should be strengthened by improving the statistical capacity of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, and by enhancing the analytical capabilities of the monitoring framework.

20. While attainment of the Millennium Development Goals was vital, the Committee for Development Policy believed that people in Africa also deserved improved health and education, tools for expanding crop yield, and better infrastructure to assist them in moving from the agricultural sector to other sectors, such as manufacturing and services. Investments in electricity, roads, telephones and irrigation were also crucial in order to achieve a high and sustainable level of growth.

21. **Mr. Alvarado** (Observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country was constructing a new society based on guarantee of the social, economic, cultural and political rights enshrined in the new Constitution — a document drawn up by a group of elected citizens, with the participation of all social sectors, and adopted by popular referendum. The Government had pledged to improve the quality of life for all Venezuelans, in particular those that had historically been excluded, since, as in most underdeveloped countries, poverty was interfering with the enjoyment of social rights.

22. Poverty was a complex, multidimensional process with many causes. Accordingly, the Government proposed the inclusion of new indicators for analysing the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which would measure the quality of life and access to health services, education, work and housing, as well as the participation of citizens in decision-making.

23. A subsistence income of one or two dollars daily could not provide a good life: there were poverty-related factors that could not be measured by daily income, such as participation in civic life. It had therefore been decided to establish a set of social missions whose purpose was to ensure the fundamental social rights of the Venezuelan population, with emphasis on those who had been most excluded. Endowed with special resources, planned and implemented by community groups and coordinated on an inter-institutional and inter-ministerial basis, they included the Misión Barrio Adentro ("Into the Barrio Mission") — made possible by a binational cooperation agreement with Cuba — which provided full access to health services and free medicines to the municipalities with the highest exclusion levels; the education missions, which ensured access of traditionally excluded persons to all three levels of education; the Misión Vuelvan Caras ("About-Face Mission"), which was training unemployed young people and adults to organize production and service cooperatives and had reduced unemployment by more than 2 per cent; the Misión Mercal ("Food Market Mission"), which ensured access to the basic food basket for the excluded population, at no cost in cases

of extreme poverty; the Misión Vivienda ("Housing Mission") which sought to provide decent housing with basic services to persons who lacked it; and the Misión Zamora, which enabled campesinos to own the land on which they had traditionally lived and worked, provided training and low-interest financing, and promoted agricultural and fishing cooperatives.

24. Other important achievements included an educational programme which universalized full-day public school education at all levels, including pre-school, with free meals and recreation, and a gender programme ensuring for women equal access to employment, equal salaries in the public and private sectors, and equal access to public positions, including 50 per cent representation by women in the National Assembly. In the area of health, infant and maternal mortality had declined, although the Millennium Development Goal had yet to be achieved, the number of HIV/AIDS cases was reduced and medicine was provided free, and other infectious diseases, such as dengue, malaria and tuberculosis, were also in decline. In the area of the environment, the Government had set aside land reserves covering about 44 per cent of the national territory, and the provision of clean drinking water had risen considerably. Internet centres funded by the State had been established in public schools and in disadvantaged communities.

25. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had achieved, by 2005, many of the targets set for 2015; others were in the process of being achieved. The Government was fully committed to the well-being of the Venezuelan people. In its view, countries receiving funds for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals should accept no conditions that compromised their sovereignty or their right to self-determination. Furthermore, a broad-based debate should be held regarding external debt, its impact on the failure to attain the Goals and the possibility of debt cancellation or other alternative approaches.

26. Lastly, he said that the Government wished to point out that the recently published report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), entitled, "Millennium Development Goals: a Latin American and Caribbean Perspective" contained inaccurate data, evaluations made out of context, and important omissions, casting doubt on the country's activities to combat poverty and hunger. That was a view shared by the United Nations agencies in his country. The Government would like ECLAC to issue a revised version of the report, with its errors corrected.

27. **Mr. Ogunnaike** (Nigeria) said that his country welcomed the Secretary-General's report entitled "Towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration" (E/2005/56) and would take steps to implement the recommendations it contained. Nigeria believed that any discussion regarding the Millennium Development Goals must be anchored in the recognition that Governments alone could not achieve their development strategies without support from other sources. The attainment of development goals was a responsibility that should be shared by developed and developing countries, and by the public and private sectors, in a mutually reinforcing way.

28. Nigeria had taken steps to tackle poverty and hunger, despite daunting odds. Its National Poverty Alleviation Programme addressed manpower and capacity development, women and youth empowerment, and the promotion of public-private partnerships. Nigeria had subscribed to the Special Programme on Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and had established a unilateral trust fund of $45 million, to be managed jointly by the Government and FAO. Its purpose was to promote agricultural productivity with a view to food self-reliance and sustainable income generation. The programme was currently under way at over 300 locations. The Government provided farming communities with infrastructure for water management, as well as seeds and seedlings, agricultural inputs, and technical information, giving special attention to such commodities as cassava, rice and vegetable oil as well as to tree crops, livestock, fishing and aquaculture.

29. The Government had also intensified its efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and had taken measures to provide access for women to microcredit and microfinance and to encourage them to form cooperatives and to participate in political, social and economic life. It hoped that such measures would help Nigeria to achieve the objectives of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy.

30. His Government believed that the provision of development assistance was not only a matter of necessity but also an obligation, and it welcomed the reaffirmation of the 0.7 per cent ODA target and urged

the developed countries that had not yet done so to announce their target dates. Development assistance must not, however, become neutralized by the debt overhang. A comprehensive solution must flow from the recognition that development, defined in terms of human dignity and well-being, was the foundation for peace and collective security. In the view of his Government, resolving the debt crisis would unleash a new wave of vigour and optimism in the development process. It therefore strongly supported the call for annual discussions within the Council on the major social and economic issues; it had often, in fact, advocated such discussions to restore credibility and influence to the organization. The welcome decision by the Group of Eight to cancel the debts of 18 heavily indebted poor countries should, in its view, mark the first step towards a series of more encompassing measures of benefit to other countries as well.

31. As a member of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Nigeria endorsed the call for good governance founded on the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and appreciated the need to meet challenges set by the major United Nations conferences and summits. It hoped that the September Summit would give clear directives to the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for fulfilling the expectations of the Doha Development Agenda. The international community must create an enabling environment for developing countries, with emphasis on market access and the elimination of tariffs and other harmful barriers.

32. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that Iceland would double its ODA by 2009. It was nonetheless clear that economic growth, led by the private sector and a fair international trading regime would be the keys to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. His Government was strongly committed to the multilateral trading system and believed that it was in the common interest to achieve special progress at the WTO Sixth Ministerial Conference later in the year. The health-related goals of the Millennium Declaration were of crucial importance, since diseases and pandemics had dire consequences on development. Health-care systems must be strengthened, providing basic services and treatment to the peoples of the developing world. It was important to safeguard progress made for women and the promotion and protection of their rights, while continuing to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In that regard, Iceland agreed that there was a direct link between the attainment of the Goals and the achievement of gender equality.

33. In order to reduce poverty and catapult developing countries into the modern industrial economy, radical measures must be taken to improve access to energy, including more efficient use of energy resources, the development of new technologies and increasing the use of renewable energy resources, with attention to new energy carriers like hydrogen. Such innovations could help to mitigate the impact of climate change and therefore deserved the backing of the international community. Iceland sought to share with other countries its expertise on the use of geothermal energy, fundamental to its economy; the United Nations University Geothermal Training Programme in Reykjavik was working to assist developing countries with geothermal potential.

34. It was essential to guard against the physical degradation of the environment and the depletion of living natural resources, in particular fish, which must be harvested responsibly and seasonally. Many coastal States and island developing States were heavily dependent on living marine resources. The Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, adopted by 108 Governments and the European Commission, was the only global mechanism that explicitly addressed the matter of the relationship between fresh water and coastal and marine environments. Bearing in mind the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Iceland urged Governments that were committed to that Programme to take steps to strengthen its implementation.

35. **Mr. Kittikhoun** (Observer for the Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) said that since the disparities between developing and developed countries were not decreasing, the target date of 2015 for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals might be overly optimistic. In any event, genuine political will and renewed global partnership would be required to set the process in motion. The root cause of the slow and mixed results was a shortage of development funding. Countries with special needs, including the LLDCs, would need a higher level of ODA to meet their development goals. The Group of LLDCs praised the European Union for taking steps to meet the 0.7 per cent ODA target by 2015 and was encouraged by the commitments made

by other donors at the recent High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development. For ODA to be effective, however, it should conform to the recipient country's development priorities and specificities without stringent conditions or complex disbursement procedures.

36. The Group of LLDCs had spared no effort in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action in the previous year. A number of projects had been put in place in the area of transit infrastructure development for both landlocked and transit developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including, for example, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, which would fill the missing links in the Asian Highway, thereby boosting regional and interregional trade.

37. Despite the progress achieved in designing the road map, the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action would require the partnership of all stakeholders, as that document, the São Paulo Consensus and relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 59/245 had affirmed. The Group of LLDCs reiterated its call for increased financial and technical support from the donor community and hoped that South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation would provide more support. It believed that the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action should remain an integral part of the overall implementation process and requested that the needs of the LLDCs should be addressed in the outcome to the session under way. The implementation of Goal 8, Target 14, was of particular interest.

38. The Ministerial Declaration, which the Group of LLDCs supported, recognized the special problems and needs of those countries, and called for continued support and assistance in their efforts to attain the Goals and to realize the Almaty Programme of Action. He reminded all stakeholders to honour their commitments in a responsible and holistic manner.

39. **Mr. Choi** Young-jin (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was concerned at the slow progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in some regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Increased attention must be paid to the least-developed countries, taking into consideration the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

40. Development goals were interconnected, with each goal reinforcing every other. For example, the promotion of gender equality contributed to reductions in maternal and child mortality, and environmental sustainability could protect against famine. Achieving development goals was closely linked to implementation of the outcome of the major conferences and summits, and the process could be facilitated by strengthening the critical role of the Council in coordinating stakeholder actions.

41. He wished to highlight four key issues that were critical in achieving development goals: financing for development, rural development, health issues and science and technology. To maximize financing for development, it was necessary to cultivate domestic resources, secure more aid and promote international trade. Domestic resources could be expanded by increasing savings, improving tax administration and making public administration more participatory and transparent. To generate reliable long-term development resources, successful completion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations was essential. His Government had doubled its official development assistance between 2000 and 2004 and was working to increase it further.

42. A second key issue was rural development. Since three quarters of the world's people living in extreme poverty were in rural areas, national development strategies should be formulated and implemented with a strong focus on rural development. His country's own experience suggested that a successful programme should feature enhancement of infrastructure, implementation of new technology to increase agricultural productivity, investment in human resource development and active participation of rural communities in employment and income generation projects.

43. A third concern was health. Three of the eight Millennium Development Goals were focused on health: reducing child and maternal mortality and combating diseases including HIV/AIDS and malaria. The cost of those diseases in economic and social terms was staggering; yet while the international community hesitated, people were dying.

44. Finally, science and technology must be promoted to attain sustainable development. For example, inventing new and affordable vaccines against infectious diseases would not only prevent illness, but

would save resources that would otherwise be needed to cope with their consequences. It was necessary to build the capacity for science and technology in developing countries and to increase international assistance in the critical research areas of agriculture, health and environmental management.

45. **Mr. Arar** (Turkey) said that the causes of poverty could not be eliminated unless structural changes took place. The necessary investment must be made to reduce poverty and income disparity, ensure gender equality and reproductive rights for all, and to protect human rights and the environment. Even though each country had primary responsibility for its own development and implementation of its poverty eradication policies, concerted effort was required at all levels to enable the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Unsatisfactory standards for transparency, the rule of law and good governance were impairing cooperation between donors and recipients. While developing countries were expected to create the necessary environment to improve their economies by mobilizing resources and involving civil society and the private sector, the contribution of the developed countries was of vital importance, as were the timely completion of the Doha Development Agenda and the reform of the major international monetary and financial institutions.

46. Five years of experience in implementing the Goals had demonstrated the urgent need for better coordination of the development policies and the activities of various international actors. The inclusion of development as a standing item on the agenda of the main international forums, such as the group of eight major industrialized countries, would facilitate such coordination and cooperation. He was confident that the Council could make a major contribution as a principal body for coordination, policy review and policy dialogue with respect to economic and social development and the implementation of the outcome of major summits and conferences.

47. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that achieving a victory over extreme poverty would require new thinking and a commitment to core values. Good governance, human rights, a vibrant civil society and an entrepreneurial private sector were essential for sustained development. The United States had pledged to double its ODA by 2006 and had achieved that target three years early. Its development assistance accounted for a quarter of the total provided by the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It had also led the way in ensuring that those funds went to individuals in need and countries that had demonstrated their capacity to use them well. States in crisis had received attention through additional commitments for humanitarian aid. The United States led the world with its $15 billion commitment to fight HIV/AIDS, and was the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In addition, it provided $500 million annually for voluntary family planning and maternal health care in 60 countries.

48. It was also a leader in the environmental sphere, working domestically and internationally to address the long-term challenges of global climate change. On a broad range of environmental issues, his Government was partnering with Governments, international organizations, businesses and non-governmental organizations to turn international commitments into action. It had also devoted substantial resources to the elimination of violence against women and increasing their participation in political and economic life. Empowering women unleashed enormous potential that would in turn promote development and strengthen democracy.

49. The historic debt forgiveness programme announced by the Finance Ministers of the eight major industrialized countries would allow 100 per cent cancellation of the debt obligations owed to the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund by countries eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. The United States also remained committed to a successful conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, as free trade was a keystone of successful development.

50. Development required a broad agenda: aid, trade, investment and debt relief. It also needed the full commitment of developing countries to create a favourable environment for market-led growth. Over the decades, the international community had learned that, without economic and social freedom, the rule of law and honest government, international aid had little value. The greatest contribution the United Nations could provide would be to help countries make and implement the right choices about how to govern themselves. Stable and successful societies were ones that protected the rights and freedoms of all individuals and built the institutions of market democracies. Those

concepts, which were at the periphery of the United Nations development activities, should be at the centre.

51. **Ms. Gallardo Hernandez** (Observer for El Salvador) said that the needs of middle-income developing countries should be considered in the analysis of the Millennium Development Goals. El Salvador had made significant progress during the 1990s in reducing poverty, especially urban and extreme poverty, despite the rapid pace of urbanization during that period. No significant gender disparity had been revealed by a study of poverty levels, but there was no room for complacency, since 43 per cent of the population still lived in poverty. Major progress had been achieved in the areas of education and primary health care between 1990 and 2002. El Salvador had also made an effort to meet its international commitments in the area of gender equality by developing the domestic legislation needed to implement those commitments.

52. *Mr. Verbeke (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

53. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Observer for Egypt) said that his delegation welcomed the role that the Council could play in providing support for countries emerging from conflict through the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. It also support its role in protecting the environment and in facing financial threats. The annual high-level segment could be an important element in both those areas, and that possibility should be studied in greater depth at the current session.

54. His delegation attached particular importance to Africa. The annual meeting of the Council with the international financial institutions could be a useful mechanism for finding innovative sources of development financing, since it would combine the political role of the United Nations with the technical role of the Bretton Woods institutions.

55. With regard to the proposal to establish a Human Rights Council, his delegation favoured strengthening existing bodies rather than establishing new ones. If all Member States were indeed convinced that the Commission on Human Rights could not be reformed, they would have to reach consensus on the form of any new mechanism.

56. He stressed the role of Member States in the work of the United Nations in the development sector and the need for country ownership of development programmes. Egypt had strengthened governance and respect for human rights, as was reflected in the changing role of civil society.

57. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) said that while each country bore the main responsibility for developing and financing its national strategies from its own resources, international development assistance remained crucial. The success of national strategies depended on the readiness of the donor community to accept them as a basis for providing coordinated assistance and supporting their implementation. Along with increasing the volume of ODA, it was essential to increase aid effectiveness. Debt relief would be equally important to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Recognizing the special needs of Africa, Russia planned to cancel bilaterally $2.2 billion of the debt owed by the poorest African States within the heavily indebted poor countries framework. Also, the expansion of international trade and progress towards a more equitable global trading system would create additional opportunities for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

58. Despite its difficulties with completing the transition to a market economy, his country had made significant progress towards its own set targets. The last four years had been marked by significant growth in gross national product; the real incomes of citizens had increased; social sector reform had been initiated to promote a more equitable provision of social services; and a new Labour Code had been adopted to improve the conditions for labour market development and protection of workers' rights. The Government was paying serious attention to combating HIV/AIDS and was committed to environmental protection and management.

59. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that no country could fully develop when its security was undermined and the fundamental rights of its people violated. For that reason, his delegation strongly supported the linkage established between development, security and human rights by the Secretary-General in his document entitled, "In Larger Freedom". Poverty reduction and improved living standards were twin development goals that his country was pursuing through its State Programme of Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth (SPRED). A progress report had stressed the need for linking those policy measures to the budgeting process. For Azerbaijan's economy to develop, broader opportunities for private sector growth must be created.

Accordingly, small- and medium-size enterprise development had been strengthened by the adoption of the State Programme on Entrepreneurship. To demonstrate its commitment to spending its oil revenues prudently, his country was conducting a pilot Extracting Industries Transparency Initiative. Under its programme entitled "Converting black gold into human gold", the Government had increased its support to the education sector and planned to complete the reform of the overall State system of public administration, legislation and policies by 2015.

60. The challenges ahead included: the development of a strong statistical base for setting baseline targets; strengthening the process of budgeting; and, most important, mitigating the economic, social and environmental impacts of the occupation of 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia. Given the need to address the economic and social dimensions of conflict, he supported the idea of the Council working with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission and, ultimately, with the Security Council. The Council's involvement should expand beyond countries emerging from conflict and its policy guidance role with respect to countries in conflict should be enhanced.

61. **Mr. Kapoma** (Observer for Zambia) said that Zambia was determined to graduate from the least developed category through the implementation of the sound economic development programmes, contained in its national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which were also aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Accordingly, the Government had scaled up the implementation of structural reforms, with a focus on improving public expenditure management and financial accounting so as to create an environment for good economic governance. Emphasis was also being placed on the development of the private sector as the engine for growth. To that end, a private sector development plan had been prepared, aimed at removing bottlenecks and creating a conducive environment for investment and trade.

62. Zambia had registered positive growth since 1999, averaging 4.6 per cent per annum. That growth had extended beyond the mining sector to include construction, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. Among the country's challenges were the very high levels of poverty, inadequate domestic funds to support development, and a weak and insufficient human resource base. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the Government would continue to implement bold measures to create wealth, reduce poverty and improve efficiency in the utilization and management of resources. He urged the international community to increase the volume and quality of aid and technical assistance to Zambia.

63. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) said that the international community was experiencing the greatest inequality humanity had ever known, and even the modest Millennium Declaration was in danger of remaining unfulfilled. People who were starving now numbered 850 million, almost a billion adults were illiterate, 325 million children did not attend school, 11 million boys and girls died each year of preventable and curable diseases, and more than half a million women died each year during pregnancy or labour. The global order was dominated by mistaken and unsustainable neoliberal policies. Overwhelming foreign debt and the net transfer of resources towards the developed world, the evident failure to comply with ODA commitments, and the lack of political will to revamp the multilateral monetary, financial and commercial system contrasted with the billions of dollars that rich nations spent on agricultural subsidies and weapons.

64. Development should be placed at the centre of the United Nations agenda and should not be hampered by a group of rich countries that openly pressured the South by imposing conditionalities which guaranteed the pre-eminence of economic, social, political and cultural models condemned to failure. Any serious proposal for United Nations reform should include the promotion of genuine development and international cooperation in all fields.

65. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See), while welcoming the agreement by the Group of Eight ministers of finance to cancel the debts of 18 heavily indebted poor countries, noted that the actual sums remained modest when compared to global military expenditures and to the subsidies paid by the industrialized countries to sectors in their own economies, which created severe distortions in the poorest countries. He hoped that the debt remission measures would be extended to some 38 heavily indebted poor countries and that those measures would not affect other aid programmes. Debt remission and increased ODA must be complemented by the creation of an international trading system friendly to the most highly indebted countries which, on their part, must

promote an economic development fully responsive to local social needs.

66. Basic scientific research, the promotion of agriculture in poorer regions and the industrial development of pharmaceutical products to combat such tropical diseases as malaria must also be financed. He saw no point in waiting for private investment in such fields, since the problems involved did not concern directly the public of the rich countries. What was needed was a generous provision of public monies in favour of initiatives such as the Global Fund, to elicit intensive and broad participation of the world's scientific research institutes.

67. **Ms. Sarfaraz** (All Pakistan Women's Association) drew attention to the Islamabad Plan of Action, adopted at the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals, organized to mark the centenary of Begum Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan, who had won the United Nations Human Rights Award in 1978. The Plan of Action sought to promote gender-based approaches to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Participants had pledged to implement the Plan and to comply with the principles of good governance, the rule of law and gender mainstreaming, as well as work towards eliminating gender-based discrimination and provide equal access for women. They had called on the international community and stakeholders to strengthen their political will and provide the financial support needed to translate their commitments into action, and to reaffirm their support for the Beijing Platform for Action.

68. **Ms. Agrebisaid** (Association tunisienne des mères) drew attention to the Tunis Declaration, which called on Governments to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and to provide training, equipment, financial and human resources, especially for families with special needs, at the private and municipal levels. The Declaration also introduced innovative measures for promoting partnerships among Governments, the private sector and civil society in order to: work towards the Millennium Development Goals; eradicate gender inequality through ICT; set up ICT training programmes for mothers and children; and ensure equitable employment in ICT sectors. Further, it encouraged NGOs to monitor the implementation of both the Declaration and the Tunis Plan of Action and to report on the progress achieved each year.

69. **Ms. Durbak** (World Information Transfer) said that, since healthy productive people were the greatest asset of any nation, it was encouraging to note that those issues had been addressed in Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6. Her organization strongly supported efforts to prevent catastrophes of the types which had occurred at Chernobyl and Bhopal and to draw attention to the health dangers of unclean water and the presence of chemical pollutants. She recommended that Governments should: implement the health-related Millennium Development Goals by coordinating efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure, more rapidly report cases of disease, particularly those with the potential to become global pandemics; and increase public knowledge of science-based health information to reduce the possibility of disease catastrophes.

70. **Ms. Bernardes** (Oasis Open City Foundation) said that the Sintra Declaration for developing Agenda 21 was a follow-up to the statement made by Brazil at the Council's 2004 high-level segment. Through the leadership of Oasis Open City Foundation, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, scientific community, schools and civil society were all working together to implement major development activities at the local level.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.